



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Success !

Pallid Sturgeon

The pallid sturgeon, a bizarre, prehistoric fish, lives only in a few parts of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is committed to protecting this endangered fish, serving on the Pallid Sturgeon Recovery Team. The team is involved in complex negotiations with river users with goals of increased populations and restoration of critical habitat. The first concentrated effort to collect the endangered pallid sturgeon in 20 years resulted from a multi-agency plan to look for the fish in more than 1,000 river miles. These efforts resulted in the capture of 6,450 fish, of which 10 were wild pallid sturgeon. This effort showed that the ratio of wild sturgeon to all river sturgeon collected dropped from about 1 in 400 in 1985 to about 1 in 650 during the sampling. Although these efforts mark only the beginning in the restoration of the endangered pallid sturgeon, they pave the way for expanding restoration activities for a fish that is believed to have existed for millions of years. (The pallid sturgeon has other worries: besides suffering from fractured and altered habitat, this protected fish is also a target of poachers, who are after the sturgeon's roe, which can bring big money on the illicit caviar market). With contemporary pallid sturgeon growing to 6 feet in length and weighing as much as 80 pounds, this species may again reestablish itself as one of the largest fish in any American river.